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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 NEW DELHI 001339

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NSC ANISH GOEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/29/2019
TAGS: PGOV PREL PTER ECON PK IN
SUBJECT: NSA NARAYANAN PULLS OUT ALL THE STOPS TO WELCOME
NSA GENERAL JONES

Classified By: Charge D'affaires Peter Burleigh for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: National Security Advisor Narayanan, the Foreign Secretary, and Defense Secretary, as well as a number of other senior officials, reiterated India's desire to strengthen the bilateral relationship during a series of meetings with National Security Advisor General James Jones and his party. The officials also discussed ongoing developments in Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as Iran.
End Summary.

Participants

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¶2. (SBU) National Security Advisor (NSA) M.K. Narayanan stressed India's desire for a stronger relationship with the United States during the June 25-26 visit of National Security Advisor General (ret.) James Jones. He confirmed the enthusiasm for the relationship evinced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Defense Minister A.K. Antony in separate meetings (septels). NSA Jones was accompanied in the meetings by Charge D'affaires Peter Burleigh, Senior Director Don Camp, Senior Director John Tien, Senior Advisor Sarah Farnsworth, Policy Advisor Matt Spence, and Communications Senior Director Mike Hammer. Defense Attaché Rick White, Acting Regional Affairs Counselor Joe Massingill, and Acting Political Counselor Robin McClellan also participated. Indian participants in the welcome dinner hosted by NSA Narayanan included Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon, Director of the Joint Intelligence Council H. Upadhyaya, Department of Atomic Energy Chairman Anil Kakodar, Deputy National Security Advisors Leela Ponappa and Shekhar Dutt, and Directors (Prime Minister's Office) Virender Paul and Pankaj Saran. Participants in the June 26 plenary session included Defense Secretary Vijay Singh, Director of the Intelligence Bureau Rajiv Mathur, Ministry of External Affairs Joint Secretary/Americas Gaitri Kumar, Deputy Director of the Research and Analysis Wing R. Banerjee, and Directors Pankaj Saran and Virender Paul.

13. (SBU) Narayanan stressed throughout the visit India's desire to bring the Strategic Partnership with the United States to a new level. He looked forward to formalizing the new architecture of the bilateral dialogues, and to strengthening his relationship with his U.S. counterpart. Referring to statements by the Prime Minister, he repeated there are "no irritants" in the bilateral relationship. We could, however, work more closely together on global issues, he said. Foreign Secretary Menon agreed that there was a lot of confidence in the bilateral relationship -- "Together, we have worked through hard things." The cooperation had been deepened through working together in the aftermath of the November 2008 Mumbai attacks.

14. (SBU) Jones said that there was "a lot of optimism about the relationship" in Washington and reiterated that the United States was committed to expanding the relationship in as many ways as possible. He said that the relationship between India and the United States was of paramount importance to the Obama administration.

15. (SBU) Turning to specifics, Narayanan stressed that cooperation on agriculture was one of India's primary goals for the relationship: "The Agriculture Knowledge Initiative is closest to Prime Minister Singh's heart." India would also like to strengthen the CEO Forum.

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16. (C) Narayanan said that intelligence cooperation was very good, and had become more "honest and productive." He talked directly with the FBI, CIA, DNI, and NSA, and had invited Admiral Blair to visit. He mentioned that there were still "some issues" related to release of U.S.-provided intelligence, and that he would like to develop a protocol on sharing information. NSA Jones committed to look into the question of caveats on the use of shared intelligence, and Massingill agreed to continue to work with Narayanan's staff on the issue.

17. (SBU) The Defense Secretary said that India had closer defense ties with the United States than with any other nation. Cooperation on procurement had been instrumental in the modernization of the Indian armed forces. Narayanan also commented that the recent surge in defense acquisitions had been a positive development for both sides. There had also been significant cooperation on exercises and visits. The issue of End Use Monitoring (EUM) was very close to being resolved, with questions remaining over only two words.

18. (SBU) The Prime Minister would like to expand high technology cooperation, but one irritant was that we remain "stuck" on dual use licensing and the entities list. Senior Director Camp said there was an interagency process to resolve the dual-use issue and undertook to get back to Delhi.

19. (SBU) Developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan were key issues in most of the discussions. NSA Jones laid out the U.S. strategy to achieve stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The United States recognized that a purely military solution was not feasible, and would not be sufficient.

Afghanistan

10. (C) General Jones said that the international community had initially done well on developing the security pillar in Afghanistan, but there had been backsliding since 2007. The problems of drugs, corruption, and lack of economic development created an unbalanced playing field in the extremists' favor. The U.S. strategy was to level the field, through reconstruction and development and good governance

and rule of law. There were 47 countries and several multilateral organizations on the ground in Afghanistan, but their good work was hampered by such challenges, as well as the existence of safe havens across the Pakistan border. There was now a need for the international community to harmonize economic efforts. The real measure of progress would be improvements in the economic situation, as well as security. President Obama was very serious about seeing tangible results in Afghanistan.

¶11. (C) The antipathy between Afghan President Karzai and former Pakistan President Musharraf had contributed to the problems. Jones continued that Karzai and Pakistan President Zardari had a better personal relationship, but they needed to develop a framework through which to synchronize their actions and statements. The United States realized that failing to succeed in Afghanistan would give a great impetus to extremists all over the world.

¶12. (SBU) The Indian officials described Indian concern about the security of its 4,000 citizens in Afghanistan. Indian development efforts include building roads and a major electricity transmission line. They were forced to rely entirely on the Afghan government for security. India was somewhat optimistic about Afghanistan's

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future, and was encouraged that the traditional tribal structures were still in place there, unlike in Pakistan where they had become much more fractured.

Pakistan

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¶13. (S) NSA Jones related that the Pakistani government was now acting responsibly and making progress on the terrorism issue. It had "taken ownership of the problem." The internally displaced were a big challenge, but 80 percent of IDPs had been housed with family members rather than in camps. The general population was behind the Army's efforts, having reached the tipping point when the Taliban's violent and cruel behavior had been seen as going too far. The Pakistani government was not trying to portray other countries as scapegoats, nor was it asking for on-the-ground assistance in moving against the extremists.

¶14. (C) The United States appreciated India's giving Pakistan the military confidence to pull its own troops off the border to be used in the western part of the country. Pakistan nevertheless still had a long way to go.

Pakistan: India's views

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¶15. (S) Narayanan explained that most threats to India emanated from outside its borders. "Terrorism sponsored by Pakistani based groups is the number one concern for us." Although it could not be said definitively that the Pakistani government was directly involved in attacks, Pakistan could certainly do more to check activities launched from within its territory. Even given the recent offensive in western Pakistan, the government had taken no steps to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorist groups who targeted India. There had been an alarming increase in the number and sophistication of infiltration attempts across the Line of Control in Kashmir this year. Intelligence reports had also revealed an increase in targeting across India, related to the elections and religious sites, but attacks had thus far been preempted. Lashkar e Taiba (LeT), in particular, was increasing its level of sophistication, and had measures in place to try to mask its involvement, such as buying explosives locally and using Indian citizens who had been taken to Pakistan for training via Bangladesh or Nepal, and then sent back to India (along with Pakistani counterparts using fake Indian identity cards) claiming to be "India

Mujahadeen" or "Deccan Mujahadeen." Pakistan was also trying to re-ignite Sikh militancy through Khalistani leaders living in Pakistan. All of these centers were operating more or less openly, and were well-equipped and manned. This led to a belief there was an "element of state sponsorship." India had asked for the transfer of several Pakistanis who were under some form of detention, but there was no optimism that the suspects would be turned over to India. It would be helpful, continued Narayanan, if the U.S. could continue to exert pressure and perhaps get custody for prosecution in the United States of people like Hafiz Saeed and Lakhvi. Indeed, he continued, there needed to be more pressure exerted on Pakistan by the entire world. Jones responded that the U.S. would continue to communicate with the Pakistanis to press for more progress, and to ensure that "people don't act on a false perception." He had been pleased that the Pakistani Interior Minister had expressed willingness to visit India and provide information.

¶16. (SBU) Foreign Secretary Menon said that India had tried for the last seven years to develop an anti-terrorism dialogue with Pakistan. There had been some progress under

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Musharraf, but that had dissipated as his position weakened. Now there was a question as to how much the central government authority could actually accomplish, as evidenced by the challenges in Swat. Bringing the Indian population on board to support rapprochement with Pakistan would be difficult; the settlement of the Pakistan question would add little in terms of day to day improvements in people's lives. India's biggest problem was poverty.

¶17. (S) There was no easy solution to the problems, Menon added. As much as the threats were made toward India, they were also a product of Pakistan's own internal condition. Narayanan continued that the Indian government was concerned that extremism would spread across the border into India. In response to a question about whether India was involved in supporting the voices of moderation in Pakistan, the NSA replied that Indian moderate clerics no longer believed it was safe to travel in Pakistan. The Wahabi influence in Pakistan was very polarizing and frightening. India was particularly concerned about the Talibanization of the Punjab. Some groups had moved to Pakistan in the last three to four years, when the situation got harder in Afghanistan. Deputy NSA Ponappa asked whether there were signs of radicalization within the Pakistani army. The RAW Deputy Director General related that India was not optimistic about the chances of success for the Pakistani offensive in the west, speculating that the actions might become more tepid, particularly if public support for the operations grows thin and there is rising discontent in the Pakistani military due to a desire to put forward a "religious face." Success would require the army's staying in place for at least two years after the offensive operations were completed.

¶18. (SBU) The Indian interlocutors said that there was a perception that Pakistan was taking action only against lower level extremists, and that it was telling that no senior Taliban leaders had been killed or taken into custody. Families who had contacts with the ISI had been shifted before the offensive, they said. "The Pakistanis are still picking and choosing," and the operations had not dented the insurgents' ability to carry on operations. The question of civilian control over the military still remained, continued Narayanan.

¶19. (SBU) Jones replied that during his visit he had been impressed by the Pakistani military's understanding of its role and its commitment to sticking with the fight and remaining during the subsequent period to provide stability. The Pakistani government and military now openly expressed the belief, "This is not an American war." They had taken ownership of the situation.

¶20. (SBU) Ambassador Ponappa questioned whether the U.S. had seen considerable funding and activity from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern states in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Jones replied that they were active everywhere, including in African states. Narayanan pointed out that a significant number of workers from Kerala were in the Gulf; they were the region's biggest export.

Iran

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¶21. (S) Turning to developments in Iran, Menon mused that the current unrest reflected a "split in the establishment," and Narayanan posited that they must be an indication that the Supreme Leader was feeling insecure. The purported reasons for the ongoing unrest had been present five months ago, but did not result in demonstrations at that time. The current demonstrations were by far the biggest unrest since the

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revolution in 1979. India's large Shia population (the second largest in the world) allowed the Indian government some insight into what was happening there. The information they had delivered was that the situation was very serious, even though it appeared the demonstrations were being brought to a "manageable" state. India's overall relations with Iran remained quite positive. The Iranians nevertheless accused India of capitulating to U.S. pressure in not moving forward with the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline, in spite of India's security and financial concerns about the project. On the nuclear question, Narayanan believed that Iran was using its nuclear ambitions to "get a seat at the high table."

Sri Lanka

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¶22. (SBU) The challenges in Sri Lanka came up several times during the discussions, with Narayanan and others explaining that India had a close, but not always comfortable, relationship with its southern neighbor. The Tamil population of southern India meant that India's relationship would be complicated. India had constantly stressed that Sri Lanka must put a framework in place in which Tamil aspirations were taken into account. Burleigh stressed that both countries need to keep up behind the scenes pressure on the Sri Lankan government to encourage progress, particularly on devolution of power and reconciliation with the Tamil community.

¶23. (U) This cable has been cleared by NSA Jones.

BURLEIGH